



Office of the Speaker
THERESE M. TERLAJE

I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 36th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

Speaker Therese M. Terlaje applauds the passage of H.R. 3967, “The Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2021”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 4, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam)- H.R. 3967, the “Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) of 2021,” was passed by the U.S. Congress today with a bipartisan vote of 256-174. The legislation aims to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances and includes a presumption of service connection for veterans who served in Guam and are suffering illnesses related to exposure to Agent Orange.

H.R. 3967 was sponsored by Veterans’ Affairs Chairman Congressman Mark Takano (D-California), with the co-sponsorship of one hundred other representatives, to include Congressman Michael San Nicolas. Bill provisions also include:

- Provide Priority Group 6 health care for over 3.5 million toxic-exposed veterans
- Provide extension of combat eligibility for health care from 5 to 10 years with a one-year open enrollment period for those veterans who missed their window.
- Streamline VA’s review process for establishing toxic exposure presumptions
- Concede exposure to airborne hazards/burn pits based on locations & dates of service
- Require medical exams/opinions for certain veterans with toxic exposure disability claims
- Add hypertension and Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance to the list of presumptions for Agent Orange exposure
- Establish a presumption of service connection for 23 respiratory illnesses and cancers related to burn pits/airborne hazards exposure
- Create a presumption of exposure to radiation for veterans who participated in cleanup activities in Palomares, Spain, and Enewetak Atoll
- Allow for a new tort claim for veterans and families exposed to toxic water at Camp Lejeune

Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Tel: (671) 472-3586 | Fax: (671) 969-3590 | Email: senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com | www.senatorterlaje.com

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- Expand agent orange exposure to veterans who served in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia
 - Improve data collection between VA and the Department of Defense
 - Commission studies related to incidents of cancer among veterans, health trends of Post 9/11 veterans and feasibility of providing healthcare to dependents of veterans
 - Require VA to provide standardized training to improve toxic exposure disability claims adjudications
 - Require VA to conduct outreach and provide resources to toxic exposed veterans

“I am tremendously grateful for the passage of House Resolution 3967 by the U.S. Congress and the recognition of Agent Orange exposure on Guam. I thank the many veterans across the nation and residents of Guam who have spent many years lending their voices in testimony to secure a presumption and corresponding healthcare coverage for those who suffer cancers, diabetes and other illnesses caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

I also thank my colleagues for timely and unanimous passing of Guam Legislature Resolution 199-36 (LS), in support of HR 3967, and those in Congress who championed justice for Guam and for all veterans, that address the environmental and health impacts of Agent Orange, radiation exposure and nuclear testing clean-up on veterans and the people of Guam. I hope that HR 3967 will find equal support and be passed by the U.S. Senate,” Speaker Terlaje stated.

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